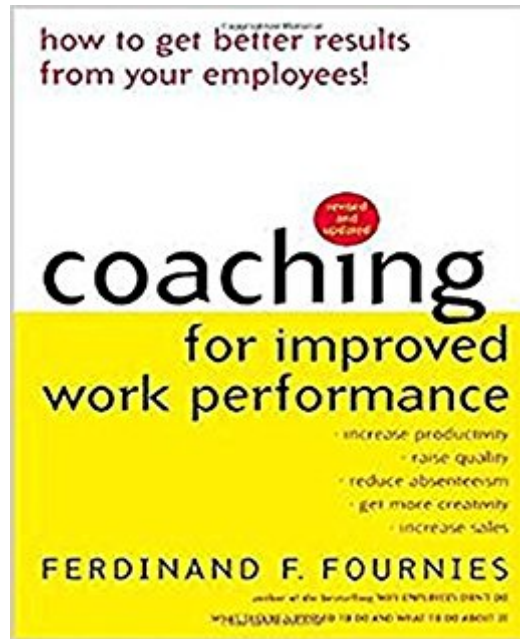


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Coaching For Improved Work Performance, Revised Edition



Synopsis

Managing employees in today's rapidly evolving workplace can sometimes feel like negotiating a minefield. Such recent new trends as flextime, telecommuting, 360-degree feedback, the flattening of hierarchies, and the increased use of temps and contract workers present tough new challenges for supervisors in every field. This timely, completely revised and updated edition of Ferdinand Fournies's classic management coaching "bible" shows you proven ways to get workers to perform at the highest level while eliminating the self-destructive kinds of behaviors that have become increasingly prevalent in recent years. In this book, you'll be taught specific face-to-face interventions you can use to enhance performance in every kind of workplace situation--from sales to creative brainstorming. There are also interventions uniquely suited to resolving problems ranging from low productivity to absenteeism to conflicts between individuals. You'll learn precisely what to say and do so that each person you supervise will want to give you his or her best work--even when that person was previously thought to be a "problem employee." Packed with brand-new case studies from Fournies's latest research into the dynamics of the modern workplace, this classic guide takes all the guesswork out of becoming the kind of inspired, "hands-on" manager that every company today is looking for!

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Customer Reviews

To me, this one is a classic. I have introduced the "Book of Ferd" to many of the younger managers in my department, with encouraging results. "Coaching" puts the problem of people management

where it belongs, in the lap of the manager, but remarkably (and atypically) provides specific direction as to "what to do differently" in order to overcome the unproductive behaviors of either (or both) the manager or the subordinate. The author provides templates and practical examples on how to handle the actual interview situation (a.k.a. the "confrontation")-- one of the most useful aspects of the book. Some of these examples deal with especially surly and insubordinate employees, and the author shows in dialog form how they can be dealt with in real time-- something they don't cover in engineering school. The only criticism I would make is that some of the strategies described in the book are most directly applicable to managers who are dealing with production or sales people; situations where output can be readily measured. In the case of employees such as engineers or R&D personnel, where evaluating performance is not so simple, the author punts by saying that if you have a hard time finding an objective measure of job performance, it means that "you haven't found a way to measure it yet". Not too helpful. Having said this, however, from experience, many of the performance problems we encounter in technical management are not so different from those found on the production line. By applying the techniques described in the "Book of Ferd" any manager can feel much more confident and deal more effectively with problem--and high-performing--employees.

As a consultant for small companies, I have found using Ferdinand F. Fournies' book, "Coaching for Improved Performance" an outstanding success. It has been very well accepted and an easy read for "Leads". The Coaching Analysis prepares them to then know when to use the Coaching discussion. New people to the supervision field come not knowing what to do. After reading the book and seeing the "Face to Face" video are ready to be trained in working with their employees for improved performance. I have not found any material that comes close to this material as a training vehicle. I have used this material for over 15 years.

Way back in 1979, or thereabouts, I attended a 2-day workshop led by Ferdinand Fournies that was called "Coaching For Improved Work Performance." I have never since, in my entire Human Resources career, attended a workshop more memorable, more fascinating or more useful. The book we received, and upon which the workshop was based? Yup...Coaching for Improved Work Performance. It was brilliant then, and it's brilliant now. There must have been around 40 attendees, all HR professionals, and every single one of us was open-mouthed when Mr. Fournies asked us "why is it that employees don't do what you want them to do?"...and proceeded to give us 14 separate, clear, logical, and convincing reasons why, and equally clear examples of each reason. It

was an eye-opener that I've never forgotten, and even though I've just bought the updated version of the book I've still got my original...with Mr. Fournies' signature! Whether you're a manager, a supervisor or a Boy Scout troop leader, this book will make you understand what you need to do to get commitment, comprehension and great performance from your team.

This is one book that delivers exactly what it promises: a method for bringing non-performers off of the fence and in to the game. The coaching process as spelled out in this book takes all of the awkwardness out of the usual face-to-face discussions that we use in an attempt to improve performance levels. There are many themes that run throughout the book that many managers need to come to grips with: managers are not as effective at managing people as they are processes; employees fail because their managers have failed to give them more constructive alternatives in place of their self destructive behaviors; effective interpersonal communication is vital to improving work performance; and theories of motivation cannot help you increase the level of buy-in your employees have in your plan. This book is a must read for every manager who has finally realized that you win through people and sincerely wants to know how to do it.

I've been a proponent of this book for several decades now, in its many incarnations. I've lent out and replaced so many copies that I've lost count. I've recently made it required reading for all of my supervisors, and have already begun to see improvements in problem solving, employee relations, and overall morale. This is not a manual for team building, nor is it a psychological study, or approach, to people management. Rather, it is a practical step-by-step guide to understanding why particular employees are under-performing, and a plan, with tips, on how to help that individual improve their performance. Most importantly to me, at this stage of my career, it helps leaders, supervisors, and managers develop a better perspective of their true relationship with their staff; as Fournies puts it at its baldest "you need them more than they need you". I believe it fits well with the Lean-TPS concepts of Employee Empowerment, and provides an excellent tool for Lean Change Leaders to persuade those reluctant to accept those changes. I highly recommend this book to anyone who directs the work of others.

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